

Municipal elections held in June 2014 led to some losses by ruling coalition candidates in major urban areas; the elections were deemed free and fair by local election observers. A trial against Karim Wade, son of former president Abdoulaye Wade, began in July in the Court of Repossession of Illegally Acquired Assets (CREI), where he is accused of illicit enrichment. Abdoulaye Wade, who had left Senegal after losing the 2012 presidential election, returned in the midst of the CREI investigation in April. The Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS), which he founded in 1974, requested permission to publicly assemble upon his return, but authorities denied the request.

In February, Senegal drew criticism for the imprisonment of two men reported to have engaged in same-sex relations. The detentions of rapper and activist Malal Talla and of former energy minister Samuel Sarr in June and August, respectively, also evoked public disapproval; both men were detained after expressing criticism of government officials.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

Political Rights: 33 / 40 [Key]

A. Electoral Process: 11 / 12

Members of Senegal's 150-seat National Assembly are elected to five-year terms; the president serves seven-year terms with a two-term limit. The president appoints the prime minister. In July 2014, President Macky Sall appointed Mohammed Dionne to this post to replace Aminata Touré, who was removed from power after losing a June local election in Grand-Yoff. The National Commission for the Reform of Institutions (CNRI), an outgrowth of a consultative body that engaged citizens about reforms in 2008–2009, presented a new draft constitution to Sall in February. The draft proposed an immutable five-year presidential term limit, a Constitutional Court, and limitations on the president's ability to dissolve the National Assembly. The proposals remained under discussion at year's end.

The most recent presidential elections took place in February 2012. In January, Abdoulaye Wade's candidacy for a third presidential term was validated by the Constitutional Council, whose members he had appointed. The presidential campaign period featured significant violence and intimidation, but the election ultimately resulted in a peaceful transfer of power. After placing second in the first round, Sall—a former member of Wade's Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS) who had previously served as his prime minister and campaign director, as well as the president of the National Assembly—won the March runoff. He took 66 percent of the vote, and Wade conceded defeat.

In the July 2012 parliamentary elections, Sall's United in Hope coalition, which included his Alliance for the Republic party, captured 119 of the 150 seats, followed by the PDS with 12. About a dozen parties divided the remainder.

Both the presidential and National Assembly elections were declared free and fair by international observers.

The National Autonomous Electoral Commission (CENA) is the domestic monitor of elections. Although the body is nominally independent, its members are appointed by the president on the advice of other public figures, and it is financially dependent on the government. The Interior Ministry organizes the elections.

B. Political Pluralism and Participation: 13 / 16

There is a significant opposition vote, and the opposition has viable opportunities to win presidential, legislative, and local offices, as seen in the 2014 municipal races. Opposition figures are active in politics, and political parties operate freely. The 2012 presidential election marked the second victory by an opposition candidate in 12 years.

The opposition still faces certain disadvantages when competing with incumbents—namely, major inequalities in financial resources. There is no public financing of political parties in Senegal, and international funding of parties is illegal. The ruling party can deploy a vast set of state resources to attract and maintain support, whereas opposition party leaders must often rely on personal wealth.

C. Functioning of Government: 9 / 12

Despite initial international praise of Sall's use of the CREI and the National Anti-Corruption Commission (OFNAC) to monitor corruption in government, the selection of cases is not always viewed as objective. In July 2014, the CREI began the trial of Karim Wade, who had been imprisoned and awaiting trial since April 2013. He is accused of the illicit acquisition of \$233 million. The International Federation of Human Rights, the African Assembly on Human Rights, the Senegalese League of Human Rights, and the National Organization for Human Rights have criticized the CREI for not guaranteeing a fair trial, as the court's assumption of guilt places the burden of proof on the accused. In a joint statement, the organizations also noted that the CREI provides no possibility of appeal.

Sall publicly declared his assets in 2012 after the election, as required by the constitution. In March 2014, the National Assembly passed a law requiring certain public officeholders to disclose their assets. Parliamentarians and mayors are excluded from the requirement.

Civil Liberties: 45 / 60 (–1)

D. Freedom of Expression and Belief: 15 / 16

The constitution guarantees the freedoms of speech and expression. The country has a number of independent media outlets in addition to one state television channel and a number of radio stations and newspapers that are controlled by or affiliated with the state. Several privately owned newspapers have existed for decades and are widely read. Access to the internet is not restricted.

Blasphemy, security, and criminal defamation laws are in place but generally not used to silence independent voices. There were two notable exceptions in 2014. In June, Malal Talla, a popular rapper and a leader of the Y'en a Marre (Enough is Enough) civic movement, was detained briefly for publicly denouncing corruption within the police force. He was accused of disturbing public order but released without charge within a week. In August, authorities arrested Samuel Sarr, who served as energy minister in the Wade administration, and charged him with libel against President Sall under Article 80 of the

criminal code. Sarr had posted a bank account number purported to be Sall's on a social media platform and accused the president of corruption. If convicted, Sarr could face up to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$3,000.

In March 2014, the National Assembly again refused to vote on a new press code that, among other things, would decriminalize violations of press laws; the code has been contested since its introduction in 2011.

There is no state religion, and freedom of worship is constitutionally protected and respected in practice. Muslims constitute 94 percent of the population. The country's Sufi Muslim brotherhoods are influential, including in politics. Academic freedom is legally guaranteed and generally respected.

E. Associational and Organizational Rights: 10 / 12 (-1)

Freedom of assembly is constitutionally guaranteed and respected in practice. The Interior Ministry must approve opposition leaders' requests to lead protests and demonstrations, can dictate the hours and locations of such activities, and can deploy security forces to monitor them. Two major violations of freedom of assembly occurred in 2014. In April, officials refused to allow PDS supporters to publicly gather to celebrate Abdoulaye Wade's return from France. While the PDS saw the refusal as politically motivated, Dakar city officials said the meeting was prohibited because it could threaten public order, would have obstructed the free movement of people and goods on a strategic road, and could be infiltrated by "malicious individuals." In August, hundreds protested in Dakar to show support for Karim Wade during his trial. Police employed tear gas against the crowd after protesters attempted to enter the courthouse where the trial was held.

Freedom of association is legally guaranteed. The leaders of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), unions, and political parties must register their organizations with the Interior Ministry. Workers, with the exception of security employees, have legal rights to organize, bargain collectively, and strike.

F. Rule of Law: 10 / 16

The law guarantees fair public trials and defendants' rights. The judiciary is formally independent, but inadequate pay and lack of tenure expose judges to external influences and prevent the courts from providing a proper check on the other branches of government. The president controls appointments to the Constitutional Council. Sall has promised to shift power away from the executive, and the CNRI has requested a more powerful Constitutional Court, but no major changes were made to the judicial system in 2014. Geographic, educational, bureaucratic, and financial hurdles hinder public access to the courts.

When the cardiac condition of Karim Wade's alleged accomplice, Ibrahim Abdoukhalil ("Bibo") Bourgi, worsened in June 2014, CREI officials delayed his treatment in France until October, even after the Ministry of Justice authorized it. In November, the government dismissed CREI special prosecutor Alioune Ndao without explanation and replaced him with Cheikh Tidiane Mara, a magistrate who had previously worked for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. In December, Wade's lawyers requested that he be released provisionally from jail while awaiting the completion of his trial, but the court denied the request, claiming that it would create too great a disturbance of public order.

The Extraordinary African Chambers, a special court established by the African Union and Senegal, continued its investigation into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Hissene

Habré, the ousted former president of Chad. Habré was arrested in 2013 in Senegal, where he had resided in exile. His trial, which could begin as early as 2015, would be the first use of universal jurisdiction in Africa.

Senegalese prisons are overcrowded. The Dakar-based NGO Tostan has noted poor living conditions, inadequate sanitation, and limited access to medical care for prisoners.

The low-level separatist conflict in Senegal's southern Casamance region continued in 2014 but did not lead to further large-scale displacement of the population. In May, Salif Sadio, the leader of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC), sued for peace and declared a unilateral ceasefire following secret talks held in Vatican City between his forces and the government of Senegal. The talks had excluded other wings of the MFDC that had previously split from his.

Individuals of lower castes in Senegalese society are sometimes subject to discrimination. LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) people face discrimination, physical attacks, and police harassment, and same-sex sexual activity remains a criminal offense. In February, two men reported to have engaged in same-sex relations were sentenced to six months in prison, a punishment in accordance with Article 319 of the criminal code.

G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights: 10 / 16

Citizens generally enjoy the freedom of movement and the right to choose their own residence. The civil code facilitates the ownership of private property, and the government generally provides compensation when it expropriates land. However, the enforcement of land tenure is not consistent in rural areas. A May 2014 report by Amnesty International noted a recent spike in forced evictions in southeastern Senegal precipitated by the government's sale of land rights to mining companies.

Human rights organizations note persisting difficulties for women in the country. In 2014, former prime minister Touré's initiative against gender-based violence continued, aiming, among other things, to halt the practice of female genital mutilation, which is practiced illegally throughout Senegal. Rape and domestic abuse also persist, and abortions for medical reasons are difficult to obtain. Women cannot obtain credit as easily as men, and early marriage remains an issue. Elements of Islamic and local customary law, particularly regarding inheritance and marital relations, discriminate against women. A gender parity law has resulted in women holding 64 seats in the 150-seat legislature. In the 2014 municipal elections, parity was not respected for candidacies in Touba, a city in central Senegal.

A Senegalese Ministry of Justice survey, released in September 2014, estimated that over 30,000 of the 54,837 children attending *daaras* (Koranic schools) in Dakar are required to beg in the streets. Other forms of forced labor, child labor, and sex trafficking also remain concerns, despite funding increases between 2012 and 2013 to the National Taskforce Against Trafficking of Women and Children.

Scoring Key: X / Y (Z)

X = Score Received

Y = Best Possible Score

Z = Change from Previous Year

[Full Methodology](#)